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# REVIEW: Faithfully Yours: The Letters of Byron Herbert Reece

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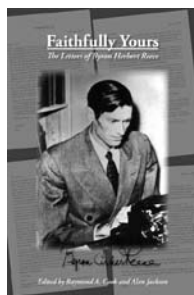
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described as “the most attractive place in the city, where citizens congregated to spend a quiet Sunday in the park among friends and relatives both living and deceased.” Kaemmerlen has filled her book with intriguing and often heartwarming stories of the famous and not-so-famous residents of Oakland Cemetery. She tells the story that Atlanta was named after Gov. Wilson Lumpkin’s daughter Martha not once but twice. She describes the heroic deed of Dr. Noel Pierre as he saved the Confederate hospital in Atlanta from being burned by Sherman’s troops. A wonderful sense of the past unfolds as Kaemmerlen recounts Ransom Montgomery’s courageous act, which resulted in his being the only slave owned by the State of Georgia, and describes the heartbreaking story of Sarah Kugler Dye and her desperation to give her son a proper burial as the war raged around her. She weaves the stories of Julia Collier Harris, who was a dynamic journalist in her own right, and of the Rich brothers, who went on to build Rich’s Department Store. Be prepared to laugh, cheer, cry and sometimes get angry as you relive Georgia’s past through Kaemmerlen’s historically inspired stories. Recommended for all libraries with an interest in the Civil War and Georgia’s history.

— Reviewed by **Ronda Sanders**  
Hall County Library System

**Faithfully Yours: The Letters of Byron Herbert Reece** edited by Raymond A. Cook and Alan Jackson (Cherokee Publishing Company, 2007; ISBN 978-0-8779-7374-4, \$17.00).

By the early 1940s, Byron Herbert Reece, then in his 20s, was already a published writer of columns, poems, prose and numerous book reviews. During this same time, he also worked on his family’s farm, taught at a local school, was invited to speak at a poetry forum and won a newspaper poetry contest. By the time he took his own life in 1958, Reece had taught at UCLA, Emory University and Young Harris College; his work had appeared in numerous publications; he had written two novels, had published four books of poetry and had won a Guggenheim Fellowship twice. All of these facts can be gleaned from the letters found in *Faithfully Yours*. But these letters reveal much more than basic facts about his life and works. As the editors say in the introduction, “Nowhere does Reece reveal his intense personality more compellingly than in his letters.” *Faithfully Yours* does not contain a complete set of Reece’s letters. But the letters included paint a vivid picture of the last 18 years of his life. The majority of the letters were written to several close friends he had met as



a student at Young Harris College, but the most letters sent to a single person were to a young writer he never met. As could be expected, many letters discuss literary topics, such as the progress of his work, books he had read recently, opinions about his own works and those of others and writing advice. But, throughout his letters, Reece also reveals his feelings about teaching, classical music, politics, farming, nature and more. *Faithfully Yours* seems to be the only existing print collection of his letters and is especially recommended for libraries that maintain a collection of Georgia author materials. If adding this book to your collection, be sure to have some of Byron Herbert Reece’s works available, because his letters are likely to create interest in the works he mentions.

— Reviewed by **Julie Camp**  
FSU MSLIS Distance Student

**Circling Home** by John Lane  
(University of Georgia Press, 2007; ISBN 978-0-8203-3040-2, \$24.95).



After settling down in Spartanburg, S.C., author John Lane traced an old, chipped plate on a topological map to draw an arbitrary radius around his home and set out to explore his neighborhood. Traveling on foot, by kayak, bicycle and car, Lane navigates the rich history, ecological diversity and social constructs of this Southern city. With a voice that resonates with love for the natural history of the area, he reconstructs the geography from ancient history through the 21st century, providing readers with a clear vision of the effect that humans have had on the landscape through the centuries. Alternating between wistful reveries on the original native inhabitants of the land and his personal protectiveness of the remaining wildness, Lane vividly describes the terrain. While Lane’s focus is on natural history, the strength of his observations lies in his personal struggle to come to terms with the many dichotomies present within his neighborhood — between the Southern locals and new transplants, blue-collar workers and country club members, environmentalists and developers. Exploring the complicated intersections of class, economics, biology and sustainability, Lane merges the personal, the present and the past in a way that creates a rich sense of history of place — all within a short radius of his home in one small part of the world. *Circling Home* is recommended for any collection with a focus on Southern history, anthropology and natural history.

— Reviewed by **Kate Farley**  
Lane Library, Armstrong Atlantic State University